

## Mission Statement for the Blue Heron Learning Center

As development continues to encroach upon once natural areas, it is imperative that spaces be created where man and nature can coexist. The Jasper Soil & Water Conservation District strives to provide quality environmental education for visitors, students, and teachers of all ages.

### History

In the 1980's, a group of aggressive investors began development at the new I-95 and Exit 21 interchange in Ridgeland, SC. Many acres of valuable forested wetlands were cleared, filled, and paved. Overnight gas stations, fast food restaurants, and convenience stores were constructed where Blue Herons once nested, owls hooted, and birds sang. Eventually, the US Army Corps of Engineers required developers to pay fines and construct two small mitigated wetlands. In 1996, the Jasper Soil & Water Conservation District entered into partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies to provide quality environmental education about the native flora and fauna of Jasper County and the South Carolina Low country.



Longleaf Pine Forest in Jasper County.

Blue Heron  
Learning Center

**Education  
Series**

**2005-2006**



Education for  
Conservation

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Blue Heron Learning  
Center

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## Reserved Tour Descriptions

### Fledglings' Tour Pre-K thru 1st, up to 40 stu- dents



Cloudless Sulphur  
Butterfly at the  
Blue Heron  
Learning Center.

For the very young, 20 minutes is appropriate in each of three areas: the nature trail, pond ecology, and classroom—Feathers & Furs.

Children are introduced to the concept of habitats, and particular emphasis is placed on NOT handling wildlife without adult assistance.

### Introduction to Native Habitats and Wildlife Grades 2-12, up to 40 students

This is considered the standard tour. Groups visit three venues (Blue Heron Trail, Classroom, and Exhibit room) in two hours. This tour is an excellent introduction to the habitats and wildlife in our region. The classroom program is tailored by grade level; 2-3 grade = Food Chain Challenge, 3-5 = To slime or not to slime (reptiles vs. amphibians), 6-12 =

Field Identification of Native Wildlife.

### Feathers & Furs Grades 1-12, up to 40

This is a 1-2 hour program depending on grade level. The classroom and trail are used as a general introduction to bird, plant, and animal identification. Emphasis is on plant/animal/human relationships in our everyday lives.

### Field Ecology at Blue Heron Pond

#### Grades 5-12, up to 30 students

Field Ecology is a half-day program which allows groups to complete an ecological site survey of the 10-acre Learning Center. Visitors spend 2 hours at the Classroom preparing for the survey; mastering a wide range of equipment, studying field id guides for plants, amphibians, mammals, and birds. Groups will complete 3 study units: a bird survey, a trail hike where plants will be keyed out and bugs collected, and a water creature survey from the dock using minnow traps and dip nets. Groups finish back at the Center with a discussion of the bio-diversity and apparent ecological health.

### Litter and Recycling Education

#### Grades 2-6, up to 40 students



Class working on the  
Compass Course.

This program offers general information on litter prevention, how students can help keep our county clean, and recycling fun facts. There are 6 six recycling centers located in Jasper County. This pro-

gram is 20 minutes and can be tied in with any of our other programs.

## Teacher Workshops 2006



In order for teacher workshops to be offered, we must have at least 15 participants. Registration is \$15/ workshop and includes all resource materials. Workshops usually begin at 8:30 a.m. and are

wrapped-up by 4:00 p.m. For lunch, you may bring your own or there are lots of eating establishments nearby. Workshops offered do have correlations to the SC Science Standards.

**Action for a Cleaner Tomorrow**—is a ~~DHEC workshop focusing on the importance of~~ water quality and solid waste source reduction and recycling.

**Ag in the Classroom**—is a workshop sponsored by Farm Bureau on the importance of Agriculture in our everyday lives.

**Project Learning Tree**—is sponsored by the SC Forestry Commission focusing on Forest Ecosystems.

**Project WILD & WET**— are sponsored by SC Department of Natural Resources focusing on terrestrial and aquatic wildlife and habitats.

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